

MANAGING MEETINGS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Edited by Annika L. Meinecke,
Joseph A. Allen and Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock

RESEARCH ON
MANAGING GROUPS AND TEAMS

VOLUME 20

MANAGING MEETINGS IN ORGANIZATIONS

RESEARCH ON MANAGING GROUPS AND TEAMS

Edited by Marshall Scott Poole, on behalf of the Interdisciplinary
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TEAMS VOLUME 20

MANAGING MEETINGS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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CONTENTS

<i>About the Contributors</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Foreword by Steven Rogelberg</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv

PART I CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF MEETING SCIENCE

Chapter 1 The Origins and Evolutionary Significance of Team Meetings in Organizations <i>Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock, Joseph A. Allen and Mark van Vugt</i>	3
Chapter 2 The Staff Meeting ... and Beyond ... <i>John E. Kello and Joseph A. Allen</i>	27

PART II THE INTERSECTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM PROCESSES IN MEETINGS

Chapter 3 Are Meetings Really Just Another Stressor? The Relevance of Team Meetings for Individual Well-being <i>Svea Lübstorf and Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock</i>	47
Chapter 4 Putting the “Group” in Group Meetings: Entitativity in Face-to-Face and Online Meetings <i>Anita L. Blanchard and Andrew McBride</i>	71
Chapter 5 Fostering Effective Debriefs: The Integral Role of Team Reflexivity <i>Roni Reiter-Palmon, Salvatore Leone, Vignesh Murugavel and Joseph A. Allen</i>	93

**PART III
DIVERSITY AND GENDER IN MEETINGS**

- Chapter 6 Social Influence in Meetings: A Gender Perspective**
Clara S. Hemshorn de Sánchez and Annika L. Meinecke 113
- Chapter 7 Multilevel Antecedents of Negativity in Team Meetings: The Role of Job Attitudes and Gender**
Fabiola H. Gerpott, Ming Ming Chiu and Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock 143
- Chapter 8 Faultlines during Meeting Interactions: The Role of Intersubgroup Communication**
Julia Straube and Simone Kauffeld 163
- Chapter 9 Intergenerational Learning in Age-diverse Meetings: A Social Comparison Perspective**
Fabiola H. Gerpott and Ulrike Fasbender 185

**PART IV
LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY IN
AND THROUGH MEETINGS**

- Chapter 10 Formal Leadership in Workplace Meetings**
Joseph E. Mroz, Emanuel Schreiner and Joseph A. Allen 209
- Chapter 11 Meetings as a Facilitator of Multiteam System Functioning**
Jordan G. Smith, Michelle L. Flynn, Marissa L. Shuffler, Dorothy R. Carter and Amanda L. Thayer 231
- Chapter 12 Meetings as Organizational Strategy for Planned Emergence**
Friederike Redlbacher 251
- Index* 275

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PREFACE

“Meetings, meetings, meetings ... too many, too often, too long”: a common refrain and complaint in today’s organizations. Yet as much time as people spend in meetings and as many critical decisions and errors are made in meetings, it is surprising how little reflection and thought is devoted to the subject. Perhaps it is because we attend so many meetings we think we know all about them. As Fletcher (1984) has commented:

It is, when you think about it, astonishing how cocksure most of us are about meetings. We treat them – as we would never treat tennis, golf, or horse-riding, let alone accountancy or computer programming – as though they can be mastered without training or guidance, or even much forethought (p. 13).

In *Managing Meetings in Organizations* Meinecke, Allen, and Lehmann-Willenbrock have assembled a set of chapters that provides this much needed reflection on meetings, their problems, their challenges, and what can be done to make them more effective. This volume includes chapters about a wide range of subjects related to meetings, some of which address well-known issues and others which break new ground.

After introducing conceptual foundations for the study of meetings, the volume considers the impact of meetings on individuals and the team itself. The importance of reflexivity in fostering effective meetings and enabling meetings is explored in depth. Attention then turns to the dynamics of gender and diversity in meetings, a topic much in need of exploration. The development of divisions and faultlines in meetings is a serious issue, and two excellent chapters consider the effects of faultlines and how they can be prevented or dissolved. The final section of the book focuses on leadership and strategy in meetings.

Managing Meetings in Organizations makes an important contribution to our understanding of this elemental social form. Meetings will always be with us in modern society, and explaining and improving them is a great contribution to organizational effectiveness.

This is the first volume of the *Research on Managing Groups and Teams* series that has been issued under the sponsorship of INGRoup, the Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research. I am proud to have this as our inaugural volume.

Marshall Scott Poole
Series Editor

FURTHER READING

Fletcher, W. (1984). *Meetings, meetings: How to manipulate them and make them more fun*. New York, NY: William Morrow.

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FOREWORD

While I don't love attending meetings, I do love studying them. And so do many, many others. Research on the topic of workplace meetings is exploding at an incredible rate. The work spans disciplines and spans the globe. A book like this allows us to stop, breathe, and get a good sense of where we are and where we need to go. I am grateful to the authors for taking on this meaningful effort.

This book does an excellent job highlighting the evolutionary origins of meetings and the different types of meetings that we encounter in contemporary organizations. The book then proceeds to capturing and discussing individual (specifically well-being) and team processes in meetings (including the role of entitativity and team reflexivity in meetings) before delving into the topic of diversity and gender in meetings. The book closes with three book chapters that shed new light on leadership and strategy processes that emerge in and through meetings. I also really appreciate that the different book chapters each lay out an agenda for research that can be incredibly helpful.

Meeting science is clearly evolving and maturing. I am excited to see meeting science finding its footing and establishing a nice balance of primary studies, evidence-based practice pieces designed to improve the current state of meetings at work, and integrative book efforts like this. Thank you to the authors for their excellent work and being such good stewards of meeting science.

Sincerely,

Steven Rogelberg
Chancellor's Professor
Professor, Psychology, Management, and Organizational Science,
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to the Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research (INGRoup), and especially to the series editor Marshall Scott Poole, for providing us with the opportunity to edit this volume. A key mission of INGRoup is to unite scholars who study groups and teams across fields and nations, and its annual conference provides an opportunity to network and socialize. It was at one of these conferences that the editors of this volume got to meet for the first time.

Accordingly, we were excited to bring together this international and interdisciplinary group of authors – ranging from early career researchers to established scholars in meeting science. Research on workplace meetings is growing thanks to the wonderful scholars who devote their time and energy to studying this intriguing – though in practice, sometimes despised – workplace phenomenon. We are grateful to the authors who contributed to this volume for their hard work.

We hope that those who share our enthusiasm for meetings will gain something meaningful from reading this book, be it an inspiration for their own research or actionable advice for an improved next meeting.

Annika L. Meinecke, Joseph A. Allen, and Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock
Volume Editors